

*East Fishkill, NY* – U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) kicked off his tour of deficient bridges in the Hudson Valley today with an inspection of the Interstate 84 Bridge over the Taconic State Parkway. Congressman Hall was joined by East Fishkill Town Supervisor John Hickman, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Regional Director Joan Dupont, NYSDOT Regional Bridge Management Engineer Dave Bennett and NYSDOT Acting Public Information Officer Sandra Jobson.

"Last summer's tragic bridge collapse of I-35W in Minneapolis was a wakeup call that we can no longer afford to take our bridges and roads for granted. We must reinvest in these vital arteries of transportation and commerce," said Congressman Hall. "Our roads and bridges carry food and retail goods, mail and people going to and from work every day. We must make sure that our roads and bridges are safe."

The 50-year-old Interstate 84 travels east-west through New York between Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. Deficiencies in the bridge are plainly visible. The substructure and steel beams that support the bridge have been rated in poor condition. The Federal Highway Administration has identified 13 "structurally deficient" bridges on the national highway system in the 19th Congressional District that Hall represents.

"Thirteen federal bridges as well as countless others under local and state control are in desperate need of funding and attention," said Hall. "A tragedy involving these bridges would put motorists at risk and shut down vital economic thoroughfares, something we can't afford to let happen."

Before commencing the bridge tour, Congressman Hall met with NYSDOT officials to discuss New York's transportation and infrastructure needs.

"We value this opportunity to visit with Congressman Hall and discuss transportation needs which are of local, state and national importance," said Joan Dupont, NYSDOT Regional Director.

Congressman Hall serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, where he is helping push a comprehensive national bridge plan. Hall supports H.R. 3999, legislation that would create a dedicated federal fund for bridge repair.

H.R. 3999, the National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act, would improve road safety by:

- Significantly improving bridge inspection requirements.
- Providing dedicated funding for bridge maintenance and repair
- Mandating that funds be distributed based on public safety and need, not Congressional earmarks
- Establishing a trust fund, modeled after the Highway Trust Fund, to provide a dedicated source of revenue for repair, rehabilitation and replacement of structurally deficient bridges that cannot be appropriated for any other purpose.

-30-